

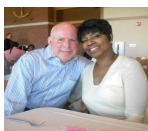
# Mostly True: An Exploration of My Family History

Jessica Urban

Advisor: Albino Carrillo

## Abstract

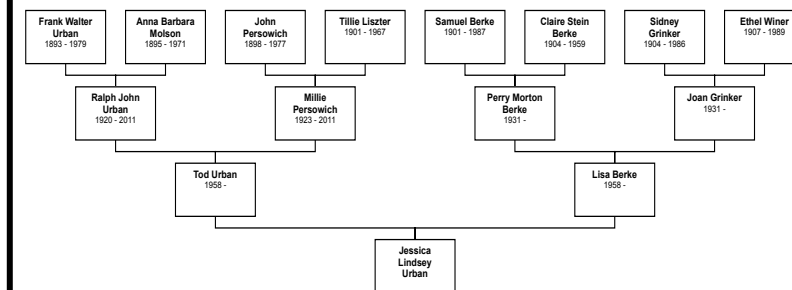
Family histories are tricky things, especially when the people in the stories don't necessarily want to talk about their pasts. My family immigrated to the US in the early 1800's, many to escape the anti-Semitism that was rampant in their countries. Through a series of personal interviews, family stories passed down from generation to generation, and my own imagination to fill in the gaps, I have compiled a series of short stories about my family and their lives in America from their arrival here in the 1800's to the present day. Although each family has a different story to tell, the stories of love, loss, and faith unite all of us, no matter our backgrounds.



## What is Creative Non-Fiction?

- Creative nonfiction is stories that are based on and rooted in fact, but are not necessarily 100% true.
- The creative portion of the nonfiction makes the stories read more like fictional pieces, meant to grab the readers attention.
- Creative nonfiction often requires historical research.

## Family Tree



## Research

- Ancestry.com
- Primary sources
- Primary documents
- Secondary Sources
- Immigration Records

A story should have a beginning, a middle and an end, just not necessarily in that order. Jean-Luc Godard



## Content

- 8 short stories
  - ❖ Opening
  - ❖ Remembrance
  - ❖ Tell Me Again: Rae's Story
  - ❖ De jure – Concerning the Law
  - ❖ Polka Dots and Moonbeams
  - ❖ The 'C' Word
  - ❖ Grinker's Pharmacy
  - ❖ Afterward
- 1800's – Present Day
- Topics range from adoption to death to religion to immigration

There is a quote in *Carousel* (that's the pesky theatre major popping up) that goes, "as long as there's one person on earth who remembers you – it isn't over." My aunt and uncle died in July and September of 2012. Then entire idea for writing this thesis started with a simple story about them – parts of which have been meshed into "The C Word." My grandparents died sooner than that, but theirs were expected deaths. I like to think that I have said their names often enough – David Scott Berke, Rosalind Foy Berke, Millie Urban, Ralph John Urban, Jeanne Wyman, Claire Berke, Samuel Berke, Sidney Grinker, Ethel Winer Grinker, Sophie Berke, Toiv Berke – that they are not forgotten, not passed over. They are alive in our memories, even sometimes in our words and actions – something I am always pleased to see. Call it my version of the Mourner's Kaddish if you will. As long as there are people who are willing to listen, there will always be stories to be told.